



Office of the Maricopa County Constables

Constable Incident Report

Principle: Maricopa County Constable Kent Rini
Kyrene Justice Court
201 East Chicago Street
Chandler, Arizona 85225

Failure to Report a Minor (non-injury) Traffic Accident in a Maricopa County Vehicle
And Conduct Unbecoming a Maricopa County Elected Official/Employee.

Date of the Offense: January 18th 2019
Location: New Constable Training: Tubac Golf Resort
One Otero Road, P.O. Box 1297
Tubac, Arizona 85646
(520) 398-3503

Synopsis: On Friday, January 18th 2019, Maricopa County Constable Kent Rini was found to have backed his 2011 County Issued Ford Escape into a mobile trailer owned by the Arizona Constables Association while attending new constable training at the Tubac Resort located at One Otero Road in Santa Cruz County, Arizona and not reporting the incident.

Subsequent investigation, determined that at the time of the incident, Rini was approximately two hours late for training having admitted to being unable to attend after becoming ill from over consumption of alcohol on the evening of Thursday, January 17th 2019.

Investigation: On Friday, January 18th 2019 at approximately 1010 hours, while assisting with field training problems for new constables attending mandatory training at One Otero Road Tubac, (Santa Cruz County) Arizona, I was advised that students had moments earlier witnessed an unreported traffic collision on Private (Resort) Property between a Maricopa county vehicle being driven (and solely occupied) by Maricopa County Constable Kent Rini and a trailer owned and operated by the Arizona Constables Association.

Students reported that after Rini backed the county vehicle into the tow tongue on the double axel trailer (causing a notable audible metal on metal contact noise), he pulled forward, exited the vehicle and walked to where students were involved in scenario based training. He made no attempt to check for damage to either the trailer or the county vehicle, nor did he report his actions to anyone around him or to Maricopa County authorities.

Several students and instructors thought Rini exhibited as strange or "off balance" while walking.

As he approached Maricopa County Deputy Constable Chris Mueller (one of the scenario instructors), Mueller could detect the moderate smell of alcohol related odors emitting from Rini's person.

Mueller instructed staffers to find me and I responded to Mueller's location and made contact with Rini in a grass park area of the resort near where Mueller was instructing.

Rini was unshaven and disheveled in appearance and I noted that within a foot of distance, I too could smell both the odor of alcohol as well as human vomit emitting from his person.

I specifically asked Rini why he both looked in the condition he was found in as well as to why I was smelling both vomit and alcohol. Rini stated that he had been "throwing up" and was still feeling "sick". When further pressed, Rini volunteered that he had consumed "a lot" of vodka the previous night (Thursday, January 17th 2019) while alone in his room at the resort.

I have previously received training as a sworn officer to both detect and investigate crimes involving the ingestion of alcohol through the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Sworn Academy as well as through classes approved and sponsored by the Arizona Peace Officer's Training and Standards Board (over a four decade career).

Rini first stated that he "wasn't sure" that he had been involved in the collision with the trailer, but quickly changed his story to indicate that he knew he had made collision contact, however, that there would be no damage to either vehicle, based upon his low speed at the time of the event. When specifically asked by me, he could offer no explanation as to his failure to physically check for damage upon his exit from the vehicle, nor his failure to report the collision now some time later in the day.

I further stated to Rini that his actions had interrupted the course of instruction being conducted and that he had missed two hours of field problems training. He made no response back to me, nor offered further explanation for his behavior.

He did admit that he had no intention of reporting the collision to anyone, contrary to Maricopa County Policy & Procedures.

Rini's demeanor was appropriate and his posture, balance and facial expressions did not indicate that he was currently under the influence of alcohol. He did present as someone quite ill from over consumption of alcohol and at one point he began gagging and coughing in my presence, but did not ultimately vomit again.

Maricopa County Deputy Constable Chris Mueller is a former career Arizona State Department of Public Safety Sworn Trooper, who has also been trained and has extensive experience in the investigation of crimes involving alcohol. I consulted with him and found that we both believed that Rini's explanation of having ingested a large quantity of alcohol on the previous evening was both plausible and believable under the circumstances.

Tubac, Arizona is in rural Santa Cruz County, Arizona. From past professional experience, I am aware that independent testing for alcohol ingestion in a case like this would require extended transport by vehicle into Tucson and due to the nature of this specific event, I noted that it did not warrant a request for assistance from the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, so neither were attempted.

Several students who had witnessed the collision, stated to me that they had observed Rini (who was the lone occupant and driver) seated in the driver's seat of the County Vehicle attempting to back the SUV into an area near where the ACA trailer was parked. They watched as he collided with the trailer tow tongue via the rear area of the SUV at a slow speed, which had resulted in a loud metal on metal sound emitting from the scene as well as the visual shaking of the trailer upon collision.

Upon my arrival, I found that unknown ACA staffers had moved the trailer from the location where it was struck and readied it for transport from the scene behind a staffer's personal pick-up truck quite a distance away.

ACA Past President Ken Sumner and I examined both the trailer and Rini's assigned County Vehicle and found a paint transfer from the trailer to the plastic rear panel of the county vehicle as evidence of the collision. No further damage was found on either vehicle. Examination of the scene where the trailer had been parked was not possible (based upon the surface of the ground and the fact that the trailer had been moved prior to my arrival).

During my voluntary interview with Kent Rini, he stated that he "had a drinking problem".

Rini offered that he had brought a large bottle of Vodka (alcohol) with him to the training and had consumed a great quantity of the contents of the bottle alone in his room each night after training, but in particular on the evening of the night before (confirmed to be Thursday, January 17th 2019). He stated he started drinking the night before around "5:00 PM" and stopped at "Around 9:30 PM". He awoke around five am on Friday morning and felt very ill. He "threw up" a great deal before falling asleep again in his room, missing class and awaking again around nine thirty with a "bad hangover". This in turn made him miss the first two hours of the field problems class.

Rini says that he has been having un-treated over consumption of alcohol issues "for years" and regularly over indulges alone in his home with similar results.

Kent Rini requested and was furnished with the contact information for the Maricopa County Employee Assistance Program, so that he might inquire as to treatment options.

I then contacted Resort Management staff and found that Rini had been assigned Room/Bungalow Number 3 for his stay at the property. I was assisted in locating the maid for that part of the complex, one Theresa Molina who informed myself and resort management that she had already cleaned Rini's room after check out.

She described it as somewhat disheveled, however could not remember whether or not she had observed signs that Rini had vomited. She did produce a 59 ounce empty bottle of Toto's Brand Vodka from the recycled container on her cleaning cart. She remembered finding it discarded in Rini's room, but could not remember where in the room it had been when she found it.

I photographed the bottle and later the photograph was shown to Kent Rini. He positively identified it as the discarded/empty bottle he left in the room at check out time.

Rini stated that he had brought that bottle and another bottle of vodka currently packed in his personal suitcase with him from home on Sunday, January 13th 2019. Rini could not remember whether the seal had been broken on the now empty bottle upon arrival at the resort, but did advise that it had certainly been "quite full" when he arrived.

Rini advised that he usually drinks only beer and he typically consumes at least "a six pack a day", seven days a week. Vodka he says he saves for special occasions.

I searched the County Vehicle and found NO other alcohol containers anywhere inside. His personal luggage with the second bottle of alcohol was not examined by me or offered up for destruction by Rini.

Maricopa County Constable personnel were instructed to transport Rini's County issue vehicle back to the San Tan Court Center and Rini was transported by me home to his residence in Phoenix at the conclusion of training.

I have instructed Rini not to operate the vehicle in any capacity until further arrangements have been made, nor to attend any further training sessions until a remediation plan is developed.

Michael D. Branham
Presiding Constable of Maricopa County
Arrowhead Precinct
Northwest Regional Court Center
14264 West Tierra Buena Lane
Surprise, Arizona 85374
(602) 390-2184



Office of the Maricopa County Constables

February 8th 2019

To: Constable Kent Rini
From: Constable Mike Branham, Presiding Constable

Since being formally installed as Constable for the Kyrene Justice Court, you and I have now been present for two formal meetings with Ms. Roni Stradling, Court Manager for the Kyrene Justice Court as well as two informal work sessions with Constables and the Deputy Constable for your area to address your substandard performance in the handling, preparation & return of official court documents for your area.

During the month of December 2018 and moving through your swearing ceremony, you and all of the other new Maricopa County Constables were given both classroom as well as field training and one on one instruction in the proper methods for receiving and cataloging court documents, proper service of those documents and instruction on how to complete returns for those documents and successfully filing them with the proper courts.

You were then assigned and attended mandatory New Constables Training in Southern Arizona, where the prompt and accurate service of court generated documents was again highlighted for you in your mandatory training. You were also given opportunities to ask questions and clarify service of said documents through all of the training received.

Additionally, you were given instructions to ask for assistance from Deputy Gordy Leitz and the other members of your area when questions on how to proceed with specific types of court documents arise and Ms. Stradling and her staff even volunteered to be of some limited assistance in these important matters.

As of this report, you are performing at these duties in a substandard level and your performance is undermining confidence in your office and the office of constable county-wide.

Examples of, but not limited to the substandard performance of these duties:

An order of Show Cause/Fingerprint Order which was received by you and transported to the offices of a local attorney. In my presence during a coaching session, you generated an official Declaration of Service, which you signed stating that you personally served the attorney the order on behalf of his client. You originally returned to the court insufficient information to allow Ms. Stradling and her staff to gauge whether or not the Fingerprint Order had been processed and received by the attorney's office. When questioned, you immediately prepared a Declaration of Service in my presence and signed the document officially attesting to having delivered the order to the attorney. Follow-up by Ms. Stradling's staff with the law firm found this information to be false. They had not received the order from you on that day and were not currently under any judicial order to have their client appear at the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office for fingerprinting in this court matter.

When you and I discussed the follow-up information, you admitted that you had NO idea whether or not you had actually served them with the fingerprint order.

In a second recent example, you returned an un-served Order of Protection from the Arrowhead Justice Court to me. Your Declaration of Non Service lacked a great deal of specific detail on your attempts to find and serve the defendant in this case. You however, signed the Declaration of Service indicating that the order had been served and myself and court staff found that a receiving court clerk had entered a note in the official court files indicating service had been COMPLETED by you, when in fact this had not occurred. This action happened because you signed the Declaration of Service and attested to such service.

While there are a number of checks and balances in the court system, both of these serious errors could have resulted in a justice of the peace taking action against defendants for failing to comply with proper court orders.

Potential loss of personal liberty could have occurred in both of these cases for defendants, as well as complaints generated against both yourself and the justice court by the attorney and plaintiff for lack of due diligence.

Additionally, you personally could be held in contempt by a judge and/or criminally charged for authoring false and misleading official documents.

Remediation Plan

In order to assist you and restore confidence in you and your office, Ms. Stradling (in a very limited capacity), your area constables and yourself have agreed to participate in a remediation plan which will include the creation of forms for your use in managing and appropriately denoting the work accomplished in the service of court documents.

Further instruction will also be given to you by both myself and the other constables of your local area in identification, handling/processing and return of court documents.

No one wishes for you to fail, however the success of this remediation plan rests entirely with you and your ability to absorb and retain the information being presented.

Failure to correct said deficiencies will result in complaints to the Arizona Constables Ethics and Training Board, which in turn could result in action by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors to suspend you (or take other punitive action) from your official duties.

You may author a rebuttal to this written document for inclusion into this file. Such a rebuttal must be authored and returned to me with a five day time period from the date of this receipt for inclusion in said plan. Failure to submit such a rebuttal will be interpreted as acknowledgement of the veracity of the information contained within this memorandum.

You will be furnished with both immediate feedback from those involved in this remediation plan as well written feedback from me as the plan progresses.

Please ask for assistance, clarify information or strengthen the process for improvement.

I stand ready to assist you or to further clarify these positions.

Respectfully,

Michael D. Branham
Presiding Constable, Maricopa County


February 14, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

I Kent Rini am resigning as Maricopa County Kyrene Prescient Constable effective Feb.15th 2019 due to personal reasons.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kent Rini". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name "Kent Rini".

Kent Rini

A handwritten date "02/14/19" in cursive script. The date is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed word "Date".

Date



Office of the Maricopa County Constables

Since the initial drafting of this improvement plan, additional errors and omissions including but not limited to entries into official Constable logs, incomplete and inaccurate reporting on court documents and inaccurate written reporting on other official documents have continued to plague Constable Rini.

On Thursday, February 14th 2019, Kent Rini advised both myself and the Board of Supervisors for Maricopa County that he was voluntarily resigning the Office of Constable for the Kyrene Justice Precinct effective 2/15/19. He submitted a written notification to the Clerk of Board and returned to me all Maricopa County Issued Property in his possession.

All official documents in his possession were either re-assigned for service or processed and his Official Constable's Log for February 2019 was archived for submittal to the Clerk of the Board as required by statute.

A temporary workflow plan has been developed for the Kyrene Justice Court for Constable related activities.

This matter has now been officially closed.

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